

On Media Consolidation

My name is Greg Merritt; I am a citizen of Blaine, Minnesota. I am an active volunteer member at KFAI FM in the Twin Cities. I speak here only for myself. My views are not necessarily those of the station, underwriters or staff.

I am speaking in support of: Media De-Consolidation and an opening of the public spectrum to independent, low power FM radio.

My experience includes over twenty years in the telecommunications industry; where in the 1990's, I was a USWEST compliance manager for the Civil Enforcement Consent Order project. That project was more or less a corporate plea bargain following repeated violations of the cross subsidy rules, established in the MFJ - the Modified Final Judgment to the telecommunications act of 1938. As you know, the MFJ established the rules for the deregulation of AT&T and the Bell System.

In My Opinion: the company followed the "letter" rather than the "spirit" of the cross subsidy rules. They did this in order to gain an advantage over the competition. Big companies want economies of scale; so, they gobble up the competition, and make up their own rules, ala Enron, WorldCom, and Tyco.

Deregulation of monopoly without competition has not helped the consumer in the industries of: telecommunications, the airlines, or the media.

Media Consolidation = Fewer voices = Weakening the kind of political discourse that formed this country.

Don't let America follow the Italian model, where first a corporation controls the media outlets, next, the CEO becomes Commander-in-Chief, followed by incomplete news reporting and stifled information flow which become tools to manipulate the will of the people. Do not let Fox merge with Clear Channel.

America's strength flows from cultural diversity vocalized, and an informed political discussion. Low power FM assists vocal diversity and discussion.

Vocal diversity is the hope for humanity, through greater cultural understanding, which leads to peace.